

City of North Saint Paul
March 16, 2021
Approved City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Furlong called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was conducted at City Hall in the Council Chambers, and also via Zoom.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member Scott Thorsen
Council Member Candy Petersen (via Zoom)
Council Member Lisa Wong
Council Member Cole
Mayor Terry Furlong

Staff: City Manager Scott Duddeck, Deputy Clerk Jennie Kloos, Fire Chief Jason Mallinger, Finance Director Jason Zimmerman, Communications Consultant Kari Erpenbach, City Engineer Morgan Dawley

III. ADOPT AGENDA

On motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Petersen, with all present voting aye (5-0), motion carried to approve the agenda as presented.

IV. TOPIC(S)

A. Ball Field Use/ Rental Fees

Discussion was held on field fees, specifically for the North St. Paul Athletic Association Groups. There have been discussions about charging a user fee going forward and the Athletic Association Group has expressed hardship and difficulty with paying the fee. With the upcoming season, staff is looking for direction regarding the rental fees for the North St. Paul Athletic Association Groups. After council discussion, the consensus is to waive the fee for the upcoming season.

City Manager Duddeck mentioned that he is planning a meeting with the school district regarding the field use and materials cost.

Discussion was also held regarding the lighting on the ball fields and what the cost or savings would be to switch the bulbs to LED's. Information to be directed to the Electric Director during the upcoming council meeting.

B. Review Downtown Sidewalk/ Streetscape Plan

City Engineer Morgan Dawley and Paul Hornby with WSP gave a presentation to the council on different images and eliminating some of the cast in place concrete benches and planters to replace with moveable tables/chairs and planters that could be removed seasonally.

Overview was given on the type of planters, seat walls and the sidewalk design. Comment was given in regards to not being able to move them and the issues that may be caused with snow removal and the maintenance issues that may become complicated over time. With the significant investment of the project, the appearance over time may be an issue.

Council Member Thorsen asked if the business owners have been given opportunity to review the layout. City Manager Duddeck indicated this plan being brought to council first to receive feedback then the business owners and the Business Association.

Mayor Furlong commented that the corner of Margaret and 7th tends to get quite congested during the car show and would ask that the planter on that corner be scaled down in that location.

The general consensus of the council is move in the direction of eliminating the permanent seat benches/planters and replace with more portable benches.

C. Ramsey County HRA:

City Manager Duddeck informed council on new information received regarding Ramsey County HRA. Ramsey County has had an HRA in place but has not assessed residents in the past. They are looking to change this. North St. Paul and St. Paul have had an HRA in place since 1971, which means Ramsey County would need approval from both of these cities to tax their residents. What this is intended to do is to create a funding within Ramsey County for all cities that would generate approximately \$11.6 million per year. Funding would require an application process with no guarantee as to who would receive the funding. These funds would help with affordable housing and many other opportunities for housing within the county. With the majority of council looking for more information, Mr. Duddeck will invite a representative from Ramsey County Community Development Department attend a future meeting and answer any questions council may have.

D. Fire Chief Operational Updates:

Fire Chief Mallinger introduced himself to the council starting with personal background information. Chief Mallinger and his wife live in North St. Paul and have 2 adult daughters. He joined the North St. Paul Fire Department as a part-time paid on call fire fighter in 1989. He's held many positions within the Fire Department. In 2000 he was hired as a full-time employee in the Public Works Department and in 2005, started full-time with the Fire Department as a full time Fire Inspector and Code Compliance Officer.

The 2020-year end department review was busy with 1,478 total incidences. The highest it's been, up 123 calls from 2019. The department is currently staffed with 34 total fire fighters including the full- time staff. Mallinger is also Chair of the East Metro Public Safety Training Facility Board.

Mr. Mallinger reviewed some of the goals he has for 2021 which include: getting back to normal operations due to Covid and changes with retirements and resignations. Continue hiring of paid on call firefighters to get up to the max of 40. Having all rental licensing properties on OpenGov by late summer to late fall. Replace the 2006 Trailblazer that is budgeted for 2021. Annual appreciation dinner for firefighters and meetings to honor accomplishments/new hires.

Mayor Furlong thanked Chief Mallinger for his service and is in appreciation to Chief Mallinger and his crew as a part of the North St. Paul team.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion by Council Member Thorsen, seconded by Council Member Cole, with all present voting aye (5-0), Mayor Furlong adjourned the workshop meeting at 6:23 p.m.

/s/ Terrence J. Furlong, Mayor

Attest: /s/ Scott A. Duddeck, City Manager/Clerk